



World Chronicle

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REVIEW OF NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY COMPLETED

Representatives of 187 countries adopted an historic agreement in May 2000 that breathed new life into the 30-year-old Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and raised hope for nuclear disarmament. The consensus, the first achieved in three successive review conferences over 15 years, included an "unequivocal undertaking by nuclear-weapon states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals". In this edition of **World Chronicle**, Hannelore Hoppe, Chief of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch at the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs, discusses some of the achievements that resulted from the recently held review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

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ANNOUNCER: From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is **World Chronicle**, an unedited interview programme about major global issues.

Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's **World Chronicle**.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns, and this is **World Chronicle**.

Over fifty years have passed since the world entered the nuclear age. Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons while guaranteeing the benefits of peaceful application of nuclear energy, is a tremendous challenge to world peace and security. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, known as the NPT, has become the cornerstone of global efforts in this direction. Since its entry into force in 1970, membership of the Treaty has steadily grown to its current 187 State Parties. Recently at United Nations Headquarters in New York, representatives of the world's nations met to review the 30-year-old Treaty. Are we now safe from the threat of nuclear holocaust?

Our guest today is an expert on the NPT. She is Hannelore Hoppe, Chief of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch at the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs. Joining me to talk with Ms. Hoppe are Judy Lessing of *Radio New Zealand* and James Wurst of *InterPress Service*.

Ms. Hoppe, welcome to World Chronicle.

Ms. Hoppe, you may be familiar with the aphorism that politicians' promises are like piecrusts. The other day, the Conference affirmed the will of the members, the States Parties, to eliminate nuclear weapons but of course there's a strong suspicion that some countries would like to join the nuclear weapons club. How seriously can we take statements like pledges to eliminate nuclear arms?

HOPPE: I think we should take these pledges very seriously. The Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which just concluded its work on The 19th of May, was the first review conference that took place after the Treaty was extended indefinitely in 1995. At that time the States Parties agreed on a package of decisions in order to further strengthen the treaty and that package of decisions included, in addition to the decision on the indefinite extension of the Treaty, a decision on strengthening the review process for the treaty, a decision on principles and objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as a resolution on the Middle East. Now, the Conference that took place in New York was to review the implementation of the Treaty provisions and at the same time also take into account what was agreed in 1995, at the time of the indefinite extension. And I think the consensus that has been reached on the 19th of

May on key issues related to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, is an important consensus. It does not mean that now all the problems are solved. There remain a lot of difficult issues to be implemented and it will be the next five years that will determine how serious and honest States Parties are going to implement the benchmarks they have set with the adoption of the benchmarks.

LITTLEJOHNS: Ms. Hoppe, since the previous review conference India and Pakistan conducted, I think, 11 nuclear weapons test. Yet the Review Conference decided, rather strangely I thought, that these two nations are not considered to be nuclear states. How can countries that clearly have a nuclear capacity not be recognized as nuclear states?

HOPPE: I think I should say that the Conference for the first time did actually deplore the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, something that was not possible during the preparatory process, and that is a significant development. But it has been always made clear by the States Parties that they would not consider giving India and Pakistan special status or the status of a nuclear weapons state in that context. The NPT is very clear about which country is a nuclear weapons state and which country is not and this is inscribed in the provisions of the Treaty; namely, those states that have conducted nuclear tests before the first of January 1967 are considered nuclear weapons states.

LITTLEJOHNS: Why that particular date?

HOPPE: That was the date that was negotiated at the time when the NPT – the Non-Proliferation Treaty – was negotiated and at that time there were five states that had conducted nuclear tests: the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, China and France.

LITTLEJOHNS: Now, Israel, Cuba, in addition to India and Pakistan are non-parties to the Treaty, is there any possibility to think that they might be brought on board?

HOPPE: India, Israel and Pakistan are states that have long withheld the – have maintained the option to stay outside the Treaty. India in particular, and Pakistan as well, have regarded the Treaty as a discriminatory treaty because it distinguishes between haves and have nots. Both those countries and Israel possess nuclear facilities that are not safeguarded. Cuba is in a different category. Cuba has signed the Treaty of Tlatelolco which is a treaty that prohibits nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. Cuba has also recently signed an additional protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency regarding safeguards of nuclear facilities. So Cuba is, for different reasons than India, Israel and Pakistan, not a party of the NPT.

LITTLEJOHNS: So Cuba is sort of half in and half out?

HOPPE: It is for political reasons. Not so much that they possess nuclear capabilities.

LESSING: I'm very curious because you've been talking Ms. Hoppe about India and Pakistan as not being nuclear states but I'd like to go back to what Michael said. To ordinary people they have the bombs. They have tested. They have successfully tested. So does this give them a kind of second-class status in relation to the five nuclear powers you've named and is that a problem?

HOPPE: The States Parties in the final declaration adopted on the 19th of May made it very clear that they would like to have India and Pakistan and Israel join the Treaty, but as non-nuclear weapons states. And they should join the Treaty without delay and without any conditions. And I think one has to look at this in connection also with states that would clearly possess nuclear capabilities like South Africa or Kazakhstan, Belarus and Ukraine. All of those joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the early part of the 1990's as non-nuclear weapons states and there is no agreement whatsoever among the States Parties that would result in having India and Pakistan to join the Treaty as nuclear weapons states. It has been always a question of *de facto* they have the nuclear capabilities. But joining the Treaty and pronouncing themselves as they did as nuclear weapons states that is not an acceptable measure that the States Parties to the NPT would be agreeable to.

LESSING: I have read some of the statements by non-governmental organizations who have followed this conference very, very closely – and indeed they would have as many experts I would suggest as some countries do – and they have described these forward steps, this agreement by the five major nuclear powers as baby steps but nevertheless they welcomed them. Would you agree with both these of those characterizations that they're baby steps but they need to be welcomed?

HOPPE: I think whenever a review conference of this kind takes place the result is a consensus result and therefore it has to be acceptable to all of those that participate in the negotiations. With respect to what was agreed in 1995 in the principles and objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, there were three I would say measures of a so-called programme of action for nuclear disarmament. And these were the negotiations and conclusions of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the negotiations of a Treaty on the Fissile Material put on the banning of the production of fissile material, and progressive and systematic efforts toward the goal of the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. Now this

programme of action I would say has been further enriched with the steps that were agreed in the final document adopted on 19 May. They are certainly not enough for some states as they do not go far enough in setting a time frame as to when these nuclear weapons would actually be eliminated but they contain an unequivocal commitment by the nuclear weapons states which is for the first time explicitly set, and reaffirmed and strengthened their commitments under Article VI of the NPT. So I'm sure you will have those who will say these are tiny little steps or baby steps and, as I said, it is a consensus document and I think these are important steps that will move the process forward.

WURST: Going to that statement, the unequivocal one, that's one of the key sentences in all of these pages. And it says, quoting from the Final Document, "An unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapons states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament to which all States Parties are committed under Article VI". Now, in the closing session, the Ambassador of Mexico speaking, on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, this seven-nation coalition of like-minded states, said in reference to this agreement said, "What has always been implicit has now become explicit and this act both reinforces and revitalizes this Treaty". A few minutes later Robert Gray, the US Ambassador, said, "That has always been our commitment -- it's more of the same". Which one is it?

HOPPE: I think it is, in my view, an explicit commitment to Article VI. The discussion about the unequivocal commitment started already during the preparatory process and in fact was rejected by the nuclear weapon states on many occasions in that process. And with the Conference starting and the statement by the five nuclear weapons states, a joint statement, which was for the first time submitted to a review conference making already a reference to such an unequivocal commitment, I think it is, in my view, an explicit commitment to the implementation of Article VI.

LITTLEJOHNS: Ms. Hoppe, without going into too many details, what is Article VI?

HOPPE: Article VI of the Treaty is actually one of the crucial articles in the Treaty which is an undertaking by all states to conduct negotiations in good faith towards measures leading to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and the elimination of nuclear weapons, as well as to a treaty on general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

LITTLEJOHNS: This is World Chronicle. Our guest is Hannelore Hoppe, Chief of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch at the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs.

WURST: I'd like to get back again to the same point on the unequivocal undertaking as you said. The five nuclear states did talk about that unequivocal undertaking but in the context of the ultimate elimination, which has become sort of diplomatic code for never. Now, it does not say ultimate it says total elimination so what does this mean in terms of how soon we could expect to see some serious, deep cuts, not only cuts in nuclear weapons but also the loosening of the political currency of nuclear weapons as a force say of politics?

HOPPE: I think one should keep in mind that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons also talks about non-proliferation, and that being the most important element of the Treaty is the only Treaty that exists that commits the nuclear weapons states to the elimination of nuclear weapons, to nuclear disarmament. It is, of course, unrealistic to believe that this goal can be achieved in the next few years. It's an ultimate goal that is shared by the majority – by all states. It is however the interpretation as to when and how soon and how fast it should happen. This is different. Now the nuclear weapons states, in particular the Russian Federation and the United States, have engaged in negotiations to reduce their nuclear arsenals. I think one of the important factors that led to the smooth beginning of the conference on the 24th of April was the fact that Russia had just ratified – or the Russian Duma – had just ratified, approved the ratification of the Start II Treaty. It is now for the United States to finalize the ratification of the Protocol of 1997. And both have agreed to commence negotiations on the Start III Treaty, which would even further reduce their nuclear arsenals. So one needs to take that into consideration that there are steps underway which are aimed at reducing the high number of nuclear weapons that are still around to lower levels yet, of course, not acceptable to most of the non-nuclear weapons states that have foregone the option of ever becoming nuclear states.

LITTLEJOHNS: Ms. Hoppe, in a statement after the Conference the British American Security Information Council, a non-governmental expert group, said nuclear war is actually more thinkable today than in the past decade. They acknowledge that even baby steps, you used that term also I believe, toward a more secure planet is something to be smiled at. But they say also the paper – this is the Final Document – is full of shoulds, urges

and oughts. Now you can't really nail things down with a bunch of shoulds, urges and oughts so I'm surprised that you're so optimistic about the results that is going to emerge from this.

HOPPE: Well, I'm optimistic in a sense that it's the first time in 15 years that the states parties were able to agree on a document reviewing the past and also setting out very practical measures for the future. And as I said earlier, this is a consensus document. It has been carefully negotiated among all those that participated.

LITTLEJOHNS: But we all know that consensus tend to paper over differences and they can come back and bite you, these differences.

HOPPE: And I think that is why it is now for all States Parties to implement what was agreed and they have until 2005 to do that for the next review to take place.

LITTLEJOHNS: Let's keep our fingers crossed.

LESSING: I'm curious because I too share this problem with the consensus document because conferences always end up with consensus documents, if they end up with anything at all, they are often called the lowest common denominator. Outside of the Conference, though, in other times when there have been big disarmament conferences here in New York focussing on the United Nations, there were in the 1980's at least, big marches on the streets. People took to the streets. They were interested in nuclear disarmament particularly. General disarmament is fine but it was the nuclear part that caught the imagination. Where are all these people? Have they all sort of morphed into expert NGOs who know about the arcane details but it's not popular groundswell because wouldn't that help to push governments?

HOPPE: I think the popular groundswell was there. There were 141 non-governmental organizations represented. Their contribution to raising the awareness of the problem has been acknowledged by the majority of the States Parties. Those non-governmental organization were also given the opportunity for the first time to address delegations, to make their views known and to share their expertise and experience with those States Parties. I would agree with you that the pressure that used to be put on by non-governmental organizations maybe 20 years ago is not seen as heavily as it used to be. I think it is unfortunate also because the threat of nuclear weapons has somehow been lost. Unlike small arms or landmines it does not have this human face or human touch to it. But it

does not mean that it is not real and there's the concerns of accidental or unauthorized use, even terrorist use of nuclear weapons.

WURST: I'd like to go to the point rather that nearly wrecked the Conference was Iraq. Literally passed the last hour, five am on the 19th and beyond, they were negotiating over the language on how to refer to Iraq. Could you give us some sense of how that relates to the Treaty and also, more to the point, how it relates beyond you know, again, into the practical politics of the thing? What is this final decision that the debate over Iraq's nuclear programme have to this whole arrangement?

HOPPE: It is true that the final issue that almost made it impossible for the States Parties to reach agreement had to do with the reflection of the issue of Iraq in the document and mainly in connection with regional issues and the Middle East. It was for this reason that many States Parties or groups of states had actually urged the two countries concerned to agree not to lose what they had achieved during the review process but to come to an agreement that would help to get this Conference to a successful conclusion. Now the Iraq issue is mainly related to the fact that Iraq does not believe that references to its applications under Security Council Resolution 687 have any relevance in the context of the NPT. And they maintain that with regards to their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and in particular Article III of the Treaty which requires the implementation and compliance with the safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency, that they have been in compliance with that. That is not a view that is shared by other States Parties who have expressed on many occasions their concern about the non-compliance of Iraq with the provisions under the Treaty, including provisions regarding Article II, which prohibits non-nuclear weapon states from the acquisition, development and production of nuclear weapons.

LESSING: Ms. Hoppe, hanging over the Conference are always other issues – countries' policies – and in particular I wonder how heavily did the anti-missile defence shield, this new initiative by the United States in the last couple of years, how heavily did that hang over the Review Conference that we have been talking about?

HOPPE: Well, in fact this was an issue that was considered as one of the most contentious issues that would come up and will figure prominently during the discussion. And indeed it was raised by many delegations in the general debate of the Conference. There's nothing in the final document that reflects any discussion of that sort. The only rough

lines in the final document is to the fact that States Parties agreed that the Treaty on the Anti-Ballistic Missile, the anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, should be preserved and strengthened as a cornerstone of strategic stability. But in terms of the national missile defense issues that is not raised. Of course you have countries, and in particular also the delegate of China at the end of the Conference as saying that they were still concerned about the fact that important issues are not addressed and he mentioned in particular also the issue of outer space, the possibility of an arms race in outer space.

WURST: Again, with the six points that you referred to earlier – one says the engagement as soon as appropriate all nuclear weapon states in the process leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, obviously meaning that after the Big Two start working down the other three should be coming in. What do you see as being the trigger to getting a total networking, a total body of negotiations to bring in all five of the states?

HOPPE: I think the major responsibility lies here between the Russian Federation and the United States to further reduce their nuclear weapons that would allow the other three states to join in a process with all five of them together negotiating towards the ultimate goal or objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. As you will also have noted in the Final Document, there's a reference to the fact that the Conference on Disarmament should establish a subsidiary body dealing with nuclear disarmament. It's also for the first time that it is agreed also with the caveat that this should be part of the programme that the Conference on Disarmament's programme of work should agree to in the not too distant future.

LITTLEJOHNS: Ms. Hoppe, that's all the time we have. Thank you for being with us on this edition of World Chronicle.

Our guest has been Hannelore Hoppe, Chief of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch at the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs. She was interviewed by Judy Lessing of *Radio New Zealand* and James Wurst of *InterPress Service*.

I'm Michael Littlejohns. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of World Chronicle.

ANNOUNCER: Transcripts of the programme may be obtained free of charge by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to World Chronicle, United Nations, Room S-827L, New York, N.Y., 10017.

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